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The Relationship of Emotio-Sexual Orientation in Females to Androgyny & Social Self-Esteem

Joyce Gayles

Western Kentucky University

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Joyce Marie

1978

THE RELATIONSHIP OF EMOTIO-SEXUAL ORIENTATION IN FEMALES
TO ANDROGYNY AND SOCIAL SELF-ESTEEM

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of Psychology
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by

Joyce Marie Gayles

July, 1978

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THE RELATIONSHIP OF EMOTIO-SEXUAL ORIENTATION IN FEMALES
TO ANDROGYNY AND SOCIAL SELF-ESTEEM

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special appreciation is extended to the members of my thesis committee: Dr. Lois Layne, Director of Thesis; Dr. Elsie Dotson, and Dr. David Shiek for their valuable criticism and suggestions.

I am grateful to Dr. J. I. Berzins, University of Kentucky, for providing me with unpublished manuscripts of the PRF-Andro Scale and related material.

Heart-felt thanks is extended to those women who inspired my initial speculation about the relationship between androgyny and lesbian identity.

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THE RELATIONSHIP OF EMOTIO-SEXUAL ORIENTATION IN FEMALES
TO ANDROGyny AND SOCIAL SELF-ESTEEM

Joyce M. Gayles

53 pages

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The research on sex-role development, psychological androgyny, and personality variables in lesbian women was reviewed. Since previous research suggested that lesbian women tend to have characteristics which might be labelled androgynous, a study was undertaken to assess the presence of androgyny among lesbian and heterosexual women and to cross-validate the findings on the relationship between androgyny and self-esteem. In order to assess sex-role classification, the PRF-Andro Scale was administered to 30 lesbian and 30 heterosexual women. The Texas Social Behavior Inventory was used to measure self-esteem. Results showed that a significantly greater proportion of the lesbians were androgynous, and a significantly smaller proportion were feminine as compared to heterosexual women. No differences were found in the proportion of either group classified as masculine and indeterminate. A complex relationship was found between samples, sex-role classification, and self-esteem. An attempt was made to integrate and interpret the results of this study. Suggestions were made for future research in this area.

Literature Review

Traditionally, the concept of the ideal or healthy human personality has been thought to include the dimension of psycho-sexual identity in which a person is either masculine or feminine depending upon gender. Recent studies in the area of sex-role identity have introduced the concept of androgyny as a valid and desirable alternative to the traditional concepts of masculinity and femininity. These studies suggest that feminine and masculine qualities can exist in the same individual; and that when they do, the person has a greater capacity for engaging in flexible, adaptive behaviors and is likely to have a higher level of self-esteem than persons who are traditionally sex-typed.

Psychological Androgyny and Sex-Role Development

Block (1973) proposed a relationship between personal ego maturity and less traditional sex-role identity. The theoretical framework underlying Block's (1973) conception of sex-role derives from the work of Loevinger (1966, 1970) who postulated a hierarchial model of ego development wherein there is an invariable order and increasing complexity among developmental stages and in which transition from stage to stage is mediated by a dialectical process. Block (1973) adapted these stages and conceptualized the individual's sex-role development as moving progressively from the earliest stage of simple distinction between self and non-self toward a final stage of integration. At the integration level, the constellation of qualities that the person

understands to characterize herself or himself are a synthesis of traits and values both "masculine" and "feminine." Such sex-role definitions, integrating personality variables traditionally considered feminine and those traditionally defined as masculine, Block (1973) refers to as "androgynous."

Bakan (1966) in his book, The Duality of Human Existence, conceptualized "agency" and "communion" as the two fundamental modalities of all living things. Agency is concerned with the organism as an individual and manifests itself in self-assertion, self-expansion and independence--attributes assigned to the male in our society. Conversely, communion is descriptive of the individual organism as it exists in some larger organism of which it is a part and manifests itself in the sense of being at one with other organisms. Communion is exemplified by the traditional attributes of the feminine: sensitivity, nurturance, and tenderness. Bakan's (1966) dichotomy overlaps with the instrumental-expressive dimensions of Parsons and Bales (1955) and the initiation-conservation dimensions of Gough (1968), but contributes the added dimension that the task of the organism is "to try to mitigate agency with communion" (p. 40). Block (1973) suggests that the process of psychosexual development for some individuals will ultimately eventuate in a balance of communion and agency via androgynous sex-role identity.

Rebecca, Hefner and Oleshansky (1976) argue that traditional theoretical approaches to sex-role development

(e.g., cognitive-developmental, social-learning, psychoanalytic) and the empirical works stemming from them are embedded in assumptions of polarization and female inferiority. None of these approaches takes into account the differential aspects of sex-role socialization for males and females, nor do they allow for healthy deviation from traditional standards of female and male behavior.

Rebecca et al. (1976) propose a model of sex-role development similar to that of Block (1973) in which the process of socialization moves a child along from an undifferentiated stage, unencumbered by restrictions based on gender, toward sex-role polarization. As socialization techniques are imposed upon the female child by parents, school, and society in general, she tends to adopt conventional sex-typed perceptions and behaviors. This involves an active acceptance of the female role and an equally active rejection of all in her that is opposite to society's definition of that role. Yet for some persons there evolves a further process of development that allows a broader psycho-sexual identity. Rebecca et al. (1976) refer to this stage as sex-role transcendence.

The role of socialization in the process of sex-role polarization for females and males has been explored by several authors. Rubin, Provenzano and Luria (1974) studied the reactions of parents to their first-born infants. The authors found that parents differentially perceive their infant sons and daughters, even though hospital data confirm no gender differences in terms of physical or health

characteristics. Parents see their daughters as "more delicate," "weaker," and "smaller" and their sons as "firmer," "more alert," "sturdier and stronger." The authors conclude that from the moment parents know the gender of their child, a stereotypic process of socialization is begun.

In another study of sex-role socialization, Whiting and Edwards (1973) took an anthropological approach to data on observations of girls and boys in six cultures. The results suggest that although sex differences exist, they are more a reflection of style (e.g., dominance defined as offering responsible suggestions is feminine, while dominance as straight commanding is masculine) and task assignments (domestic chores for females; away-from-home chores for males). Additionally, fewer sex differences were found in cultures where boys engaged in domestic chores and infant care and where girls did not engage in infant care. In a similar cross-cultural study, Barry, Bacon and Child (1957) found that girls received more pressure to be nurturant, obedient, and responsible. Boys received more pressure to achieve and be self-reliant.

The Measurement of Psychological Androgyny

Until very recently sex-role inventories have attempted to measure sex-role identity only as bipolar ends of a single continuum, according to which a person had to be categorized as either masculine or feminine, but not both (Constantinople, 1973; Pleck, 1975). At the same time, research in this area provides considerable evidence that traditional

sex-role identity is not as healthy as it has been supposed to be. For example, high femininity has consistently correlated with high anxiety, high neuroticism, and low self-acceptance (Biaggio and Nielson, 1976; Gall, 1969; Gray, 1957; Sears, 1970; Webb, 1963). Though in some studies (Jones, Chernovetz and Hansson, 1978; Mussen, 1961; Spence, Helmreich and Stapp, 1975; Wetter, Note 1) high masculinity correlated with better psychological adjustment, in others it was found to correlate with low capacity for status, low self-acceptance, high need for self-abasement (Cosentino and Heilbrun, 1964; Mussen, 1962), emotional dissatisfaction, guilt proneness, and anxiety tendencies (Harford, Willis and Deabler, 1967). In addition, greater intellectual development has been associated with non-traditional sex-roles in children. Boys and girls who are more sex-typed have been found by Maccoby (1966) to have lower overall intelligence, lower spatial ability, and lower creativity than cross sex-typed children of the same ages.

Utilizing the concept of androgyny, Bem (1974) developed and validated the first sex-role scale that treats masculinity and femininity as two independent dimensions. With Bem's (1974) scale, it is possible to classify a person as masculine, feminine, androgynous, or indeterminate as a function of her or his endorsement of masculine and feminine personality variables. Bem's (1974) original scale measured only three categories: masculine, feminine and androgynous. The original method used to score the scale

combined low masculine, low feminine scoring persons together with high masculine, high feminine scorers to form the androgynous category. In a more recent publication, Bem (1977) has reanalyzed her method and results and now concludes that the term androgynous is appropriate only for those who score high on both feminine and masculine variables, while those who score low on the masculine and feminine scales constitute a fourth sex-role category. In validity and reliability studies, the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) showed that femininity and masculinity are empirically independent; that the concept of androgyny is a reliable one; and that highly sex-typed individuals do not tend to respond in a socially desirable direction, but specifically describe themselves in accordance with sex-typed standards of desirable behavior for women and men.

Berzins, Welling and Wetter (1978, Note 2) developed and validated the PRF-Andro Scale derived from the item pool of Jackson's Personality Research Form (1974). The PRF-Andro Scale consists of 85 dichotomous response items embodying content themes similar to the BSRI. A factor analysis of the PRF-Andro Scale yielded four factors for the masculine scale that were labelled: Social-Intellectual Ascendency, Autonomy, Orientation toward Risk, and Individualism. Three factors were labelled for the feminine scale: Nurturance, Affiliative Concern, and Self-Subordination. These PRF-Andro Scale factors are similar to the BSRI factors labelled Social Ascendency, Autonomy, Intellectual Ascendency,

and Physical Boldness for the masculine scale; and Nurturant Affiliation, Self-Subordination, and Introversion for the feminine scale. The PRF-Andro Scale and the BSRI masculinity scales correlate at .60 for men and .65 for women; the femininity scales at .52 and .50 for men and women, respectively.

In experimental studies, Bem (1975) and Bem, Martyna and Watson (1976) found that strong sex-typing in masculine males significantly inhibited their ability to display expressive behaviors (e.g., nurturance and compassion). However, the greatest effect of sex-typing was observed in feminine women who performed poorly in both the agentic and communion domains when the demand characteristics of the situations were ambiguous. Only androgynous males and females and masculine females displayed the ability to behave effectively across agentic and communion situations. In another experiment, Bem and Lenny (1976) found that sex-typed persons would avoid opposite sex behaviors even when there was monetary gain in performing these activities and that they reported feeling worse about themselves after performing cross-sex tasks than did androgynous women and men.

Spence et al. (1975), using the Personal Attributes Questionnaire to measure sex-role identity and the Texas Social Behavior Inventory (TSBI) to assess social self-esteem, found that androgynous persons reported higher self-esteem than did masculine, feminine, or indeterminate persons of both sexes. To replicate and cross-validate the finding

of Spence et al. (1975), Wetter (Note 1) developed a self-esteem questionnaire to be administered with the PRF-Andro Scale. Using this measure, he found that both high school and college students who qualified as androgynous also reported higher levels of self-esteem than did sex-typed and indeterminate persons.

Berzins, Welling and Wetter (Note 3) conducted a study in order to determine whether there were differences in the interpersonal styles of sex-typed, androgynous, and indeterminate persons. The authors used Leary's (1957) Interpersonal Behavior Circle that categorizes behaviors with respect to the orthogonal dimensions of Dominance vs. Submission (DOM) and Affection vs. Hostility (LOV). The four quadrants formed by the intersection of the DOM and LOV axes represent behaviors labelled friendly-dominant, friendly-submissive, hostile-dominant, and hostile-submissive. Berzins et al. (Note 3) found that the friendly-dominant quadrant was highest for the androgynous group, while hostile-dominant, friendly-submissive, and hostile-submissive were highest for masculine, feminine, and indeterminate subjects, respectively. Interpersonal theory holds that behaviors corresponding to each quadrant constitute self-defining interpersonal communication styles.

Jones et al. (1978) used a multi-measure approach to determining whether psychological androgyny permits greater behavioral flexibility and better adjustment. The authors looked at such variables as introversion-extraversion, locus

of control, self-esteem, problem drinking, intellectual competence, feminist ideology, and sexual maturity. The results generally did not support the hypothesis that androgyny equals adaptability for males, but the hypothesis was true for females. The authors suggest that the agentic dimension of androgyny, because of its greater social value, makes androgyny more adaptive and healthy than feminine identification.

Studies of Personality Characteristics in Lesbians

Several research studies of personality characteristics in lesbians have identified a rather consistent cluster of personality variables similar to those associated with psychological androgyny as described by Bem (1974, 1975), Berzins et al. (1978), Block (1973), and Spence et al. (1975).

Hopkins (1969), in her study of the lesbian personality, used Cattell's 16 PF test to investigate personality variables in a matched group of lesbian and heterosexual women. She hypothesized that there would be no factors, as measured by the 16 PF, that would distinguish between the two groups. Contrary to her hypothesis, the data showed the lesbian group to be higher on factors that indicate independence, resilience, dominance, assertiveness, bohemianism, self-sufficiency, and composure. These variables are some of those considered by Bakan (1966), Bem (1976), Berzins et al., (1978), and Block (1973) to be within the agentic domain. In addition, the lesbians were found to be lower than the heterosexual women on those factors that Cattell (1957) has

suggested are indicative of neurotic profiles, though the differences were not significant.

Siegelman (1972) used the Neuroticism Scale (Scheir and Cattell, 1961) along with several other instruments to measure 12 dimensions related to mental health in his study of lesbians. Consistent with the findings of Hopkins (1969), he reported that the lesbian sample was significantly higher on measures of dominance, goal-directedness, and self-esteem and lower on total neuroticism. He did not find differences between lesbian and heterosexual women on such variables as nurturance and trust.

In a study utilizing the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule, the California Psychological Inventory, and the Eysenck Personality Inventory, Wilson and Greene (1971) found that lesbian women scored significantly higher than heterosexual women on measures of dominance, capacity for status, good impression, intellectual efficiency, and endurance, while heterosexual women scored higher in the areas of neuroticism, heterosexuality, and femininity. No differences were reported between the groups on the variables of nurturance, succorance, affiliation, and self-acceptance.

Hassel and Smith (1975) attempted to determine the concept of self among lesbians using an Adjective Checklist and the Draw-a-Person test. The results show that lesbians scored higher on dimensions of autonomy and exhibition (i.e., independence) and lower on abasement and deference but were

not significantly different from heterosexual women on suc-
corance and self-confidence. The authors stated that their
findings are consistent with the suggestion of Hopkins (1969)
that lesbians are more independent than heterosexual women.
A secondary hypothesis of Hassel and Smith (1975) that their
lesbian sample would view themselves as more male in their
gender identity was not supported.

In his book, Homosexuality and Psychological Functioning,
Freedman (1971) reports the results of an unpublished study
of lesbian and heterosexual women. The women were compared
on the Personal Orientation Inventory, which measures self-
actualization, the Eysenck Personality Inventory, and per-
sonal data related to "a motivational theory of job satis-
faction and mental health" (Freedman, 1971, p. 74). Overall
results showed no significant difference in psychological
adjustment between the groups, although the lesbians were
found to be functioning significantly better in several
areas: work adjustment and job satisfaction, locus of con-
trol, valuing the same things in life that self-actualizing
persons do, acceptance of natural aggressiveness, respons-
iveness to other's needs and feelings, and the capacity for
developing meaningful relationships. Freedman (1971) states
that the lesbians seem to be more masculinely oriented in
terms of motivational pattern and acceptance of aggressive
feelings than are heterosexual women.

Two studies (Berzins et al., 1978; Heilbrun and Thomp-
son, 1977) report data which describe lesbian personality

characteristics directly in terms of the concept of androgyny. Berzins et al. (1978) report that lesbians scored quite high on the masculine scale of the PRF-Andro Scale and moderate on the feminine scale. Similar findings are reported by Heilbrun and Thompson (1977) for the lesbians they tested using the Heilbrun Scale.

Bem (1976) has suggested that what differentiates women from one another is not their degree of communion, but whether that domain has been balanced sufficiently by their sense of agency. The available literature devoted to assessing the lesbian personality indicates, as Radicalesbians (1976) eloquently stated in the essay "The Woman Identified Woman," "the lesbian is the woman who...acts in accordance with her inner compulsion to be a more complete and freer human being than her society cares to allow her " (p. 164).

Given the body of research cited above, the purpose of this study is to assess the presence of androgyny, as measured by the PRF-Andro Scale, and to cross-validate the relationship between social self-esteem and sex-role identity in lesbian and heterosexual women. Specific hypotheses of this study are that:

1. The proportion of the lesbian sample falling into the androgyny category of the PRF-Andro Scale will be significantly greater than the proportion of the heterosexual sample falling into the same category.

2. The proportion of the lesbian sample falling into the masculine category of the PRF-Andro Scale will be significantly greater than the proportion of the heterosexual

sample falling into the same category.

3. The proportion of the lesbian sample falling into the feminine category of the PRF-Andro Scale will be significantly smaller than the proportion of the heterosexual sample falling into the same category.

4. There will be no significant difference between the proportion of the lesbian sample and the proportion of the heterosexual sample falling into the indeterminate category of the PRF-Andro Scale.

5. Subjects falling into the androgyny category of the PRF-Andro Scale will score significantly higher on the TSBI than will subjects falling into the masculine, feminine, and indeterminate categories of the PRF-Andro Scale.

6. The lesbian sample will score significantly higher than the heterosexual sample on the TSBI, regardless of PRF-Andro Scale category for either sample.

Method

Subjects

Subjects were 30 lesbian women and 30 heterosexual women. Approximately 25% of the lesbian subjects were persons known to the author, another 25% were obtained from a southern Ohio lesbian/feminist organization, and the remaining half from leads gained from the above sources. Heterosexual subjects were obtained primarily through recommendations from lesbian subjects and other persons known to the author.

To be included in the lesbian sample, a potential subject was required to rate herself on the Kinsey Rating Scale (1953) as "exclusively homosexual" or "predominately homosexual, incidentally heterosexual." A potential heterosexual subject was required to rate herself as "exclusively heterosexual" on the same scale.

The ages of the subjects ranged from 20-45 years old, with a median of 27 years (see Table 1). Educational levels ranged from high school completion to PhD level, with a median of 16 years of education (see Table 2). Of the 30 lesbians, four had completed high school, 10 had between one and two years of education beyond high school, nine held bachelors degrees, six held masters degrees, and one woman had a MD degree. Of the heterosexual women, three had completed high school, seven had completed between one and two years of education beyond high school, 11 held bachelors degrees, eight held masters degrees, and one held a PhD degree.

Table 1
Age: Range, Median and Mean
for the Lesbian and Heterosexual Samples

| | Range | Median | Mean |
|--------------|-------|--------|------|
| Lesbian | 20-45 | 27 | 27.3 |
| Heterosexual | 20-43 | 26 | 28.1 |
| Total | 20-45 | 27 | 27.7 |

Table 2
Years of Education: Range, Median and Mean
for the Lesbian and Heterosexual Samples

| | Range | Median | Mean |
|--------------|-------|--------|------|
| Lesbian | 12-21 | 16 | 15.2 |
| Heterosexual | 12-20 | 16 | 15.9 |
| Total | 12-21 | 16 | 15.6 |

All subjects were residing in the north-central, north-east, or southern parts of the country. Seventy percent of the lesbians were employed with 56% of them working in professional, technical, or managerial jobs. Seventy-five percent of the heterosexual women were employed with 63% working in professional, technical, or managerial jobs. No subject identified her occupation as housewife or homemaker (see Table 3).

Instrumentation

The Kinsey Rating Scale (1953) was used to select potential subjects and to assign them to the appropriate group. The scale provides seven categories lying on a continuum from "exclusively homosexual" to "exclusively heterosexual."

The PRF-Andro Scale (Berzins et al., Note 2) was used to measure four sex-role categories: androgynous, masculine, feminine, and indeterminate. General population norms are not yet available for the PRF-Andro Scale. Therefore normative data gathered from college populations and reported in the user's manual were used to compare the scores of women in this study. The four sex-role categories were defined by performing median splits on the masculine and feminine score distributions for the sexes combined. By this method, "high" and "low" scorers on the masculine scale are indicated by scores of 16 or greater and 15 or less, respectively. On the feminine scale, the comparable values are 17 or greater and 16 or less.

The TSBI was used to measure social self-esteem. The instrument is an objective measure developed by Helmreich

Table 3
Occupational Categories
of the Lesbian and Heterosexual Samples

| Category | Lesbian | Heterosexual |
|-------------------------------------|---------|--------------|
| Professional, technical | 15 | 18 |
| Managers, officials, proprietors | 2 | 1 |
| Clerical, sales | 4 | 6 |
| Student | 5 | 5 |
| Other (not stated or unemployed) | 4 | -- |

and Stapp (1974). The authors define self-esteem as competence and self-confidence in interpersonal relationships. A factor analysis of the original 32-item scale yielded four correlated factors for females: confidence, dominance, social competence, and relations to authority figures. The scale has been split into two parallel forms of 16-items each which retain the original factor structure and correlate .97 with the original scale. Normative data have been derived from college populations only.

Procedure

Packets containing the PRF-Andro Scale, the TSBI, the Kinsey Rating Scale, demographic questions, a cover letter, and a stamped return envelope were mailed to participants. Written instructions were provided for the questionnaire and scales (see Appendices A and B).

Subjects were first asked to complete the demographic information and to rate themselves on the Kinsey Rating Scale. A subject was then instructed to complete the 85-item PRF-Andro Scale by circling "true" if she agreed with a statement or felt that the statement was descriptive of her and by circling "false" when she disagreed with a statement or felt that the statement was not descriptive of her. After completing the PRF-Andro Scale, a subject was to complete the TSBI by rating herself along a 5-point continuum for each item.

Subjects who had not responded, within 3 weeks from the date their packets were mailed, were sent a reminder postcard.

No further efforts were made to contact "delinquent" participants. The data return rate was 75%. The data for subjects who returned incomplete scales were discarded.

Data Analysis

A conservative approach to data analysis was necessitated by the design of this study. Since the samples were small and non-random, tests of significance were selected that make only minimal assumptions about the population distribution.

A two by four X^2 test of significance was calculated to determine whether there were significant differences in the relative frequencies with which the members of each group fell into the four PRF-Andro Scale categories. An alpha level of .05 was employed.

The Test for Significance of Difference Between Proportions for Independent Groups was used to determine whether differences in the proportion of each sample falling into the PRF-Andro Scale categories were greater than could be expected by chance. The test yields a z score reflecting differences between actual proportions. An alpha level of .05 was used.

Multiple Mann-Whitney U tests were employed to determine the significance of differences between and within samples on the TSBI. The Mann-Whitney U is one of the most powerful of the non-parametric tests and is an alternative to the t test. Alpha levels were set at .05.

The Median Test was used to determine whether there were significant differences in the age and educational levels of

the two groups. The median test gives information as to whether it is likely that two groups have been drawn from populations with same median on some variable.

Results

The purpose of this study was to compare lesbian and heterosexual women in terms of the PRF-Andro Scale categories and to cross-validate the relationship between self-esteem and androgyny with these two groups.

Figure 1 shows the frequency distribution for each group across the four PRF-Andro Scale categories. In support of hypotheses 1 and 3, a greater number of lesbians were androgynous and a smaller number were feminine when compared to heterosexual women. There were no differences in the relative number of lesbian and heterosexual women classified as masculine and indeterminate. Thus the hypothesis that more lesbian than heterosexual women would be classified as masculine was not supported. The hypothesis that there would be no difference in the proportion of either group classified in the indeterminate category was supported. Table 4 presents the proportion of lesbian and heterosexual women in each of the PRF-Andro Scale categories and the level of significance associated with the differences in proportion.

On the TSBI, which was used to measure self-esteem, the total lesbian sample scored higher on self-esteem than did the total heterosexual sample. Within the lesbian sample, there were no significant differences in social self-esteem between subjects across sex-role categories. Within the heterosexual sample, androgynous and masculine women were significantly higher in social self-esteem than feminine and indeterminate women, but were not different from

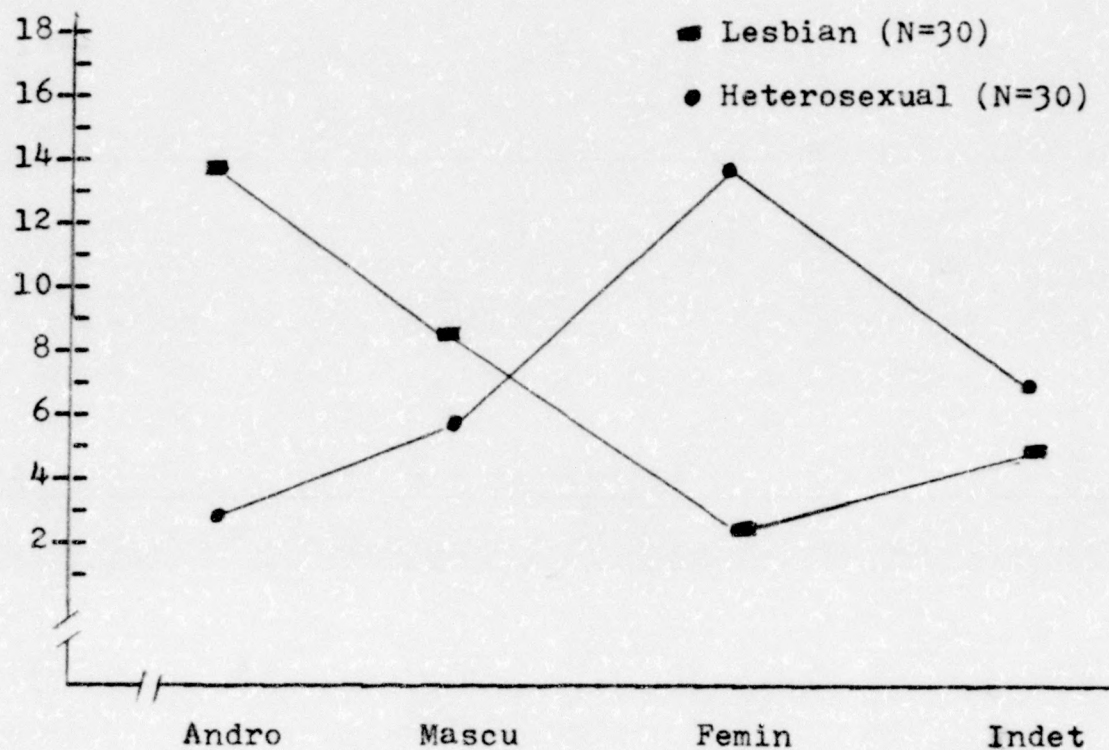


Figure 1. Frequency Distribution of the Lesbian and Heterosexual Samples Across the PRF-Andro Scale Categories.

Table 4
Comparison of Differences in Proportion of the
Lesbian and Heterosexual Samples Falling
into Each PRF-Andro Scale Category

| Category | Proportion | | <u>z</u> |
|---------------|------------|--------------|----------|
| | Lesbian | Heterosexual | |
| Androgynous | .43 | .10 | 2.80* |
| Masculine | .30 | .20 | 0.91 |
| Feminine | .10 | .47 | -3.14* |
| Indeterminate | .17 | .23 | -0.60 |

*p < .01

each other. Feminine and indeterminate heterosexual women were not different from each other in self-esteem. Comparing lesbian and heterosexual women within each category, feminine and indeterminate lesbians were found to have significantly higher social self-esteem than feminine and indeterminate heterosexual women. No significant differences in self-esteem were found between androgynous and masculine lesbians and androgynous and masculine heterosexual women. Figure 2 shows the median scores of the lesbian and heterosexual samples by PRF-Andro Scale categories. Thus the hypothesis that the total lesbian sample would be higher in self-esteem than the heterosexual sample was supported. The hypothesis that androgynous women would be higher in self-esteem than either masculine, feminine or indeterminate women was supported for the heterosexual women only. Lesbians, regardless of sex-role category, did not vary significantly from each other in self-esteem.

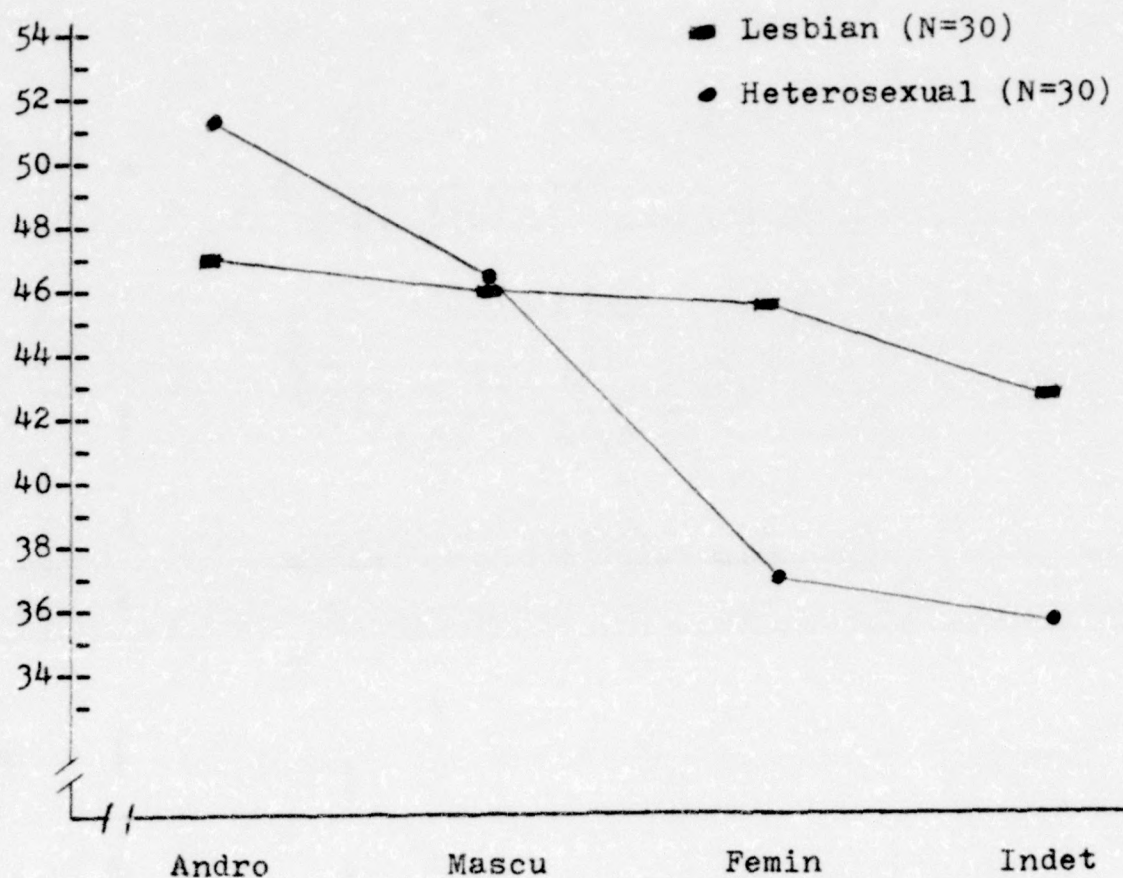


Figure 2. Median Scores on the TSBI by Sample and By PRF-Andro Scale Category

Discussion

The findings of this study support the hypothesis that a substantial number of women who identify themselves as lesbian have developed androgynous and masculine sex-role identities. Furthermore, as shown in Table 5, the mean scores of the lesbian sample on the masculine and feminine scales of the PRF-Andro Scale are similar in magnitude to the mean scores of both male homosexuals and lesbians studied by Berzins et al. (1978).

The finding that a larger proportion of heterosexual women are feminine sex-typed is consistent with the conclusions of Bem (1975), Berzins et al., (1978), and Block (1973). A comparison of the mean masculine and feminine scale scores of the heterosexual sample with mean scores of females in the normative groups of Berzins et al. (1978) is shown in Table 6.

In terms of the personality factors measured by the PRF-Andro Scale, the finding that lesbians tend to be more frequently androgynous or masculine than feminine or indeterminate is in line with those studies (Freedman, 1971; Hassel and Smith, 1975; Hopkins, 1969; Siegelman, 1972; Wilson and Greene, 1971) which found that lesbians displayed significantly more agency than heterosexual women, but not less communion.

The relationship between sex-role identity and self-esteem, as found by Spence et al. (1975) and Wetter (Note 1)

Table 5

Mean Masculine and Feminine Scores on the PRF-Andro Scale
for a Homosexual Sample (I) and the Lesbian Sample (II)

| | Masculine | | Feminine | |
|-----------|-----------|------|-----------|------|
| | \bar{X} | SD | \bar{X} | SD |
| Sample I | | | | |
| Males | 17.0 | -- | 16.0 | -- |
| Females | 16.9 | -- | 15.5 | -- |
| Sample II | | | | |
| Females | 17.5 | 4.39 | 15.6 | 3.47 |

Note. Sample I is comprised of 71 homosexual males and females.

Sample II is comprised of 30 lesbian women in this study.

Data on Sample I are from Berzins et al. (1978)

Table 6

Mean Masculine and Feminine Scores on the PRF-Andro Scale for the Normative Samples (I&II) and Heterosexual Sample (III)

| | Masculine | | Feminine | |
|------------|-----------|------|-----------|------|
| | \bar{X} | SD | \bar{X} | SD |
| Sample I | | | | |
| Males | 16.7 | 4.33 | 14.3 | 3.52 |
| Females | 12.9 | 4.76 | 17.9 | 3.50 |
| Sample II | | | | |
| Males | 16.2 | 4.78 | 14.3 | 3.57 |
| Females | 11.9 | 4.84 | 18.4 | 3.60 |
| Sample III | | | | |
| Females | 13.1 | 5.90 | 17.5 | 3.87 |

Note. Sample I is comprised of 457 men and 703 women.
 Sample II is comprised of 434 men and 552 women.
 Sample III is comprised of the 30 heterosexual women in this study.
 Data on Samples I and II are from Berzins et al. (1978).

and hypothesized in this study, was confirmed for the heterosexual sample, but not for the lesbians. Lesbians overall were higher in self-esteem than were heterosexual women overall and lesbians, regardless of sex-role category, did not differ from one another in level of self-esteem.

Jones et al. (1978), Wetter (Note 1), and Worell (Note 4) have suggested that the self-esteem component of sex-role identity is more closely related to masculine characteristics, which have higher social value, than to feminine characteristics. This may account for the high levels of self-esteem of androgynous and masculine heterosexual women in this study. It may also explain the high levels of self-esteem found in the total lesbian sample. Observing that the lesbian sample showed an overall higher mean score on the PRF-Andro Scale masculine dimension than on the feminine dimension (see Table 5), it seems reasonable to speculate that all lesbians, even those who are classified as feminine and indeterminate, possess a relatively higher degree of agency than do heterosexual women. Thus the relationship between agency and self-esteem may account for self-esteem differences found in the two groups.

Recent writings by lesbians about themselves (Jay and Young, 1972; Johnston, 1973; Love and Abbott, 1972; Martin and Lyon, 1972; Radicalesbians, 1976) suggest that the readiness to become an acknowledged lesbian involves a strong belief in oneself, in the rightness of one's chosen way of life, and in the possibility of a rewarding future.

Perhaps it is just this commitment to self and to the choices one makes that heightens feelings of self-esteem in lesbians.

Block's (1973) model of psycho-sexual functioning, as it is derived from the ego development model of Loevinger (1966, 1970), implies a strong relation between psychological androgyny and self-actualization. Persons who are functioning at a high level of psycho-sexual integration are likely to be more self-actualizing than more traditionally sex-typed individuals. Thus it is possible that self-esteem in the lesbian and some heterosexual women is tied to a factor of self-actualization and self-determination which is not yet manifested in the majority of heterosexual women. Block (1973) has stated that:

The achievement of higher levels of ego functioning for women is more difficult because individuation involves conflict with our prevailing cultural norms. It is for this reason, perhaps, that few women of the generation studied here manifested androgynous sex role definitions: it was simply too difficult and too lonely to oppose the cultural tide. (p. 526)

It may be that the lesbian's rejection of the tyranny of cultural norms and her decision to open herself to the entire range of human characteristics has freed her from some of the damaging psychological restrictions placed upon women in general.

Generalizations of this study's findings to the lesbian and heterosexual female population are limited somewhat by

the fact that the samples were small and selected in a non-random manner, resulting in an over-representation of well educated and professionally employed women. Thus with a larger, more diverse sample of women, the relationship found between sex-role identity, emotio-sexual orientation, and self-esteem may not be as strong. Nevertheless, the results found for the two groups on the PRF-Andro Scale are consistent with the data of Berzins et al. (1978), as shown in Table 5 and Table 6.

Future researchers who choose to explore the concept of androgyny, the personality characteristics of the lesbian population, or both in relation to each other, may want to base their studies on larger, more diverse samples. For example, would the same distribution pattern among sex-role categories be discovered in a sample of less educated, lower socioeconomic status women? Would the same pattern of self-esteem be found in a more diverse sample of lesbian and heterosexual women? In examining the relationship between androgyny and psychological adjustment, future researchers may want to use a multi-measure approach in order to assess aspects of adjustment beyond self-esteem.

Though supporting hypotheses about the existence of androgyny among lesbian and heterosexual women and its effect upon one component of adjustment, the results of this study raise several, more complex questions. What factors influence the development of non-traditional sex-role identity in our present milieu? Why do lesbians tend to

be less feminine and more androgynous than heterosexual women? Does the acceptance of a lesbian identity lead to a more androgynous set of personality variables or is the process in the reverse order?

As many authors (Barry et al., 1957; Block, 1973; Rebecca et al., 1976; Rubin et al., 1974; Whiting and Edwards, 1973; Kelly and Worell, Note 5; Woods, Note 6) have suggested, sex-role identity is a product of the socialization process. Traditionally, socialization for the female, as well as for the male, has involved a rigid set of systematic norms based upon a model of women and men in which biological arrangements have translated into sociocultural imperatives. For females, these have demanded that the child gradually denounce more and more of her agentic inclinations and behaviors in favor of a passive role. Central to this process of socialization is a commonly unspoken belief in the existence of innate, transhistorical, transcultural attributes and needs that are distinct for males and females. Yet rather than the existence of any innate psychological differences based on gender, it appears that the socialization of differences is possible only because of the essentially open quality of the human personality structure.

It seems likely that as the extrinsic restraints surrounding the development of woman's (and man's) identity are loosened, the probability of developing more androgynous sets of personality characteristics is increased. Two studies (Kelly and Worell, Note 5; Woods, Note 6) have explored the

relationship between sex-role identity and early socialization influences in terms of parental interactive style, but further research is needed to determine whether there are any clear patterns of socialization within the family and in the larger milieu that are strongly associated with the development of androgynous characteristics.

Numerous theories have been advanced to explain the existence of lesbianism (and male homosexuality), but the deep-seated core of the matter may very well lie in the position of woman in society, in her long-standing frustration as an individual unable to select and direct her own destiny. Thus it seems reasonable to speculate that oppression itself creates an atmosphere for the development of possibilities and the exercising of alternatives. It is entirely possible, as Cory (1963) has suggested, that for some women, lesbianism is an expression of freedom from sex-role differentiation and a result of a high level of psycho-sexual integration.

The results of this study, as well as the research on lesbianism cited in this study, strongly suggest that women who identify themselves as lesbians are, to a large extent, different in their personality characteristics from women whose psycho-sexual identity is heterosexual. Most lesbians are high on agentic and communion dimensions of personality, while heterosexual women have more of the characteristics associated with communion. It appears that lesbians are either initially more androgynous or else they develop

characteristics associated with both agency and communion as a result of their lifestyles. Regardless, by having developed some of those qualities of spirit and mind that have been traditionally called "male," the lesbian and her androgynous and masculine heterosexual counterparts may be the prototype of the fully-functioning woman. A woman who is more than feminine, more than a woman has typically been allowed to be in our culture.

Appendix A
Cover Letter to Participants

Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101
October, 1977

Dear Participant:

I am conducting thesis research on the subject of emotional/sexual identity and its relationship to various personality variables in mature women. It is hoped that this research will add to the current body of data devoted to assessing personality variables in women of various lifestyles.

To assist me in this study, please complete the enclosed questionnaires and return them in the addressed, stamped envelope as soon as possible. Please do not sign your name to any of the forms; since to insure confidentiality, all data must be anonymous.

If you wish to know the results of this research, retain the stamped postcard attached to the questionnaires. Mail this card to me not later than June 1, 1978, and a summary of results will be sent to you.

I wish to thank you in advance for your valuable assistance in making this research a success.

In sisterhood,

Ms. Joyce Gayles
Psychologist-in-Training

Lois Layne, PhD
Associate Professor of Psychology

Appendix B
Personal Data Sheet and Questionnaires

Personal Data Sheet

Please answer each of the questions below. Do not sign your name to this sheet.

Age_____

Number of years of schooling_____

Last degree attained_____

Occupation_____

Please place a check mark next to the statement that best describes your emotional/sexual orientation.

___ Exclusively homosexual

___ Predominately homosexual, incidentially heterosexual

___ Predominately homosexual, frequently heterosexual

___ Equally homosexual and heterosexual

___ Predominately heterosexual, frequently homosexual

___ Predominately heterosexual, incidentially homosexual

___ Exclusively heterosexual

On the following pages you will find a series of statements which a person might use to describe herself. Read each statement and decide whether or not it describes you.

If you agree with a statement or decide that it does describe you, circle TRUE (T). If you disagree with a statement or feel that it is not descriptive of you, circle FALSE (F).

Answer every statement either true or false, even if you are not completely sure of your answer.

-
- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Self-control is not a big problem to me. | T | F |
| 2. I like to be with people who assume a protective attitude toward me. | T | F |
| 3. I try to control others rather than permit them to control me. | T | F |
| 4. Surf-board riding would be too dangerous for me. | T | F |
| 5. Often I don't trust my emotions. | T | F |
| 6. If I have a problem, I like to work it out alone. | T | F |
| 7. I seldom go out of my way to do something just to make others happy. | T | F |
| 8. Adventures where I am on my own are a little frightening to me. | T | F |
| 9. I usually know what to say to people. | T | F |
| 10. I feel confident when directing the activities of others. | T | F |
| 11. I will keep working on a problem after others have given up. | T | F |
| 12. I would not like to be married to a protective person. | T | F |
| 13. There are many things I would change about myself if I could. | T | F |
| 14. I usually try to share my problems with someone who can help me. | T | F |

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|
| 15. | I don't care if my clothes are unstylish, as long as I like them. | T | F |
| 16. | When I see a new invention, I attempt to find out how it works. | T | F |
| 17. | I can make up my mind and stick to it. | T | F |
| 18. | People like to tell me their troubles because they know I will do everything I can to help them. | T | F |
| 19. | Sometimes I let people push me around so they can feel important. | T | F |
| 20. | I am only very rarely in a position where I feel a need to actively argue for a point of view I hold. | T | F |
| 21. | I am usually disorganized. | T | F |
| 22. | I dislike people who are always asking me for advice. | T | F |
| 23. | I seek out positions of authority. | T | F |
| 24. | I believe in giving friends lots of help and advice. | T | F |
| 25. | I am poised most of the time. | T | F |
| 26. | If someone finds fault with me I either listen quietly or just ignore the whole thing. | T | F |
| 27. | I get little satisfaction from serving others. | T | F |
| 28. | I make certain that I speak softly when I am in a public place. | T | F |
| 29. | I am afraid of what other people think about me. | T | F |
| 30. | I am usually the first to offer a helping hand when it is needed. | T | F |
| 31. | When I see someone I know from a distance, I don't go out of my way to say "Hello." | T | F |
| 32. | I would prefer to care for a sick child myself rather than hire a nurse. | T | F |
| 33. | I am in control of what happens in my life. | T | F |

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|
| 34. | I prefer not being dependent on anyone for assistance. | T | F |
| 35. | When I am with someone else I do most of the decision-making. | T | F |
| 36. | I try to get at least some sleep each night. | T | F |
| 37. | I don't mind being conspicuous. | T | F |
| 38. | I am afraid of a full-fledged disagreement with a person. | T | F |
| 39. | I would never pass up something that sounded like fun because it was a little hazardous. | T | F |
| 40. | I get a kick out of seeing someone I dislike appear foolish in front of others. | T | F |
| 41. | When someone opposes me on an issue, I usually find myself taking a stronger stand than I did at first. | T | F |
| 42. | I feel adequate more often than not. | T | F |
| 43. | When two persons are arguing, I often settle the argument for them. | T | F |
| 44. | I will not go out of my way to behave in an approved way. | T | F |
| 45. | I am quite independent of the people I know. | T | F |
| 46. | I frequently doubt my sexual attractiveness. | T | F |
| 47. | I make all my clothes and shoes. | T | F |
| 48. | If I were in politics, I would probably be seen as one of the forceful leaders of my party. | T | F |
| 49. | I prefer a quiet, secure life to an adventurous one. | T | F |
| 50. | I prefer to face my problems by myself. | T | F |
| 51. | I'm pretty sure of myself. | T | F |
| 52. | I try to get others to notice the way I dress. | T | F |
| 53. | When I see someone who looks confused, I usually ask if I can be of any assistance. | T | F |

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|
| 54. | It is unrealistic for me to insist on becoming the best in my field of work all the time. | T | F |
| 55. | I often kick myself for the things I do. | T | F |
| 56. | The good opinion of one's friends is one of the chief rewards for living a good life. | T | F |
| 57. | If I get tired while playing a game, I generally stop playing. | T | F |
| 58. | I can easily count from one to twenty-five. | T | F |
| 59. | When I see a baby, I often ask to hold it. | T | F |
| 60. | I have a good deal of initiative. | T | F |
| 61. | I am quite good at keeping others in line. | T | F |
| 62. | I feel uncomfortable when people are paying attention to me. | T | F |
| 63. | I am quite soft-spoken. | T | F |
| 64. | I usually have the feeling that I am just not facing things. | T | F |
| 65. | I think it would be best to marry someone who is more mature and less dependent than I. | T | F |
| 66. | I would resist anyone who tried to bully me. | T | F |
| 67. | I don't want to be away from my family too much. | T | F |
| 68. | I am sexually attractive. | T | F |
| 69. | I can run a mile in less than four minutes. | T | F |
| 70. | Once in a while I enjoy acting as if I were tipsy. | T | F |
| 71. | I feel incapable of handling many situations. | T | F |
| 72. | I delight in feeling unattached. | T | F |
| 73. | I often feel inferior. | T | F |
| 74. | I would be a poor judge because I dislike telling others what to do. | T | F |
| 75. | Seeing an old or helpless person makes me feel that I would like to take care of them. | T | F |

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 76. I usually make decisions without consulting others. | T | F |
| 77. I feel emotional mature. | T | F |
| 78. It doesn't affect me one way or another to see a child being spanked. | T | F |
| 79. My goal is to do at least a little bit more than anyone else has done before. | T | F |
| 80. I usually wear something warm when I go outside on a cold day. | T | F |
| 81. To love and be loved is of greatest importance to me. | T | F |
| 82. I take a positive attitude toward myself. | T | F |
| 83. I avoid some hobbies and sports because of their dangerous nature. | T | F |
| 84. One of the things which spurs me on to do my best is the realization that I will be praised for my work. | T | F |
| 85. People's tears tend to irritate me more than arouse my sympathy. | T | F |

Below are a second series of statements which a person might use to describe herself. Read each statement and decide the extent to which the statement is characteristic of you by circling one of the responses:

| A | B | C | D | E |
|----------------|----------|----------|--------|----------------|
| Not at all | Not very | Slightly | Fairly | Very much |
| characteristic | | | | characteristic |
| of me | | | | of me |

Answer every statement, even if you are not completely sure of your answer.

1. I am not likely to speak to people until they speak to me.

| A | B | C | D | E |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|---|---|---|---|---|

2. I would describe myself as self-confident.
A B C D E
3. I feel confident in my appearance.
A B C D E
4. I am a good mixer.
A B C D E
5. When in a group of people, I have trouble thinking of the right things to say.
A B C D E
6. When in a group of people, I usually do what others want rather than make suggestions.
A B C D E
7. When I am in disagreement with other people, my opinion usually prevails.
A B C D E
8. I would describe myself as one who attempts to master situations.
A B C D E
9. Other people look up to me.
A B C D E
10. I enjoy social gatherings just to be with people.
A B C D E
11. I make a point of looking other people in the eye.
A B C D E
12. I cannot seem to get others to notice me.
A B C D E
13. I would rather not have very much responsibility for other people.
A B C D E

14. I feel comfortable being approached by someone in a position of authority.

A B C D E

15. I would describe myself as indecisive.

A B C D E

16. I have no doubts about my social competence.

A B C D E

Appendix C

Raw Scores of the Lesbian and Heterosexual Samples on the
 Masculinity and Femininity Scales of the
 PRF-Andro Scale

| Lesbian | | Heterosexual | |
|-----------|----------|--------------|----------|
| Masculine | Feminine | Masculine | Feminine |
| 16 | 17 | 4 | 21 |
| 16 | 17 | 14 | 17 |
| 21 | 17 | 3 | 15 |
| 21 | 17 | 7 | 19 |
| 25 | 17 | 11 | 20 |
| 25 | 17 | 15 | 11 |
| 16 | 18 | 13 | 7 |
| 16 | 18 | 8 | 23 |
| 16 | 17 | 9 | 18 |
| 18 | 20 | 11 | 19 |
| 21 | 17 | 13 | 15 |
| 18 | 17 | 7 | 10 |
| 18 | 17 | 15 | 17 |
| 19 | 13 | 15 | 17 |
| 21 | 10 | 6 | 22 |
| 16 | 15 | 11 | 18 |
| 18 | 15 | 13 | 15 |
| 22 | 12 | 17 | 18 |
| 16 | 13 | 25 | 17 |
| 17 | 15 | 18 | 18 |

Appendix C--Continued

Raw Scores of the Lesbian and Heterosexual Samples on the

Masculinity and Femininity Scales of the

PRF-Andro Scale

| Lesbian | | Heterosexual | |
|-----------|----------|--------------|----------|
| Masculine | Feminine | Masculine | Feminine |
| 22 | 6 | 23 | 13 |
| 6 | 9 | 23 | 15 |
| 26 | 16 | 18 | 16 |
| 13 | 11 | 23 | 16 |
| 14 | 16 | 16 | 11 |
| 14 | 17 | 17 | 8 |
| 15 | 22 | 13 | 16 |
| 10 | 15 | 4 | 19 |
| 13 | 22 | 8 | 20 |
| 15 | 15 | 12 | 18 |

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